

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

**Please replace the 3<sup>rd</sup> full paragraph on page 3 with the following amended paragraph:**

These and further objects are achieved through a method ~~according to the independent claim 1~~ and through a network element as described herein. ~~according to the independent claim 2. Further advantageous characteristics of the invention are set forth in the respective dependent claims.~~

**Please replace the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph on page 5 with the following amended paragraph:**

With reference to Fig. 1, a protected path from a source node A to a destination node H utilizes a working fiber from A to C (primary node); the Drop & Continue (D&C) function is performed at C, namely the traffic is dropped towards node E of RING 2, but it is also passed through to the secondary node D; then it passes from node E to node G (which allows it to pass through) up to the destination node H; at the same time, the continued traffic passes from node D to node F until it reaches the destination node H too. Present in the node H is a Path Selector (PS<sub>H</sub>) that selects the path coming from one side or from the other (depending on the path status).